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THE EDITOR'S DIARY.

WEDNESDAY, *December 26.*

A Blow at Personal Freedom.

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT did not originate the fallacy that good intentions should not be hampered by written laws. Plato was possessed of the idea, and in the actual conduct of public affairs would have no reference to law whatever. "The discretion of the all-wise philosopher," he held, "is a perfect guarantee of excellence in administration, and stands in marked contrast to the narrow and inflexible prescriptions of a past time. Given true wisdom in the magistrates, it is absurd to hamper them by the rules and precepts of a bygone generation. Not laws, but wise men, unhampered by laws, are the ideal guides of a community." A more exact definition of the present attitude of our chief executive authorities could hardly be imagined. But it soon happened that Plato "found a dearth of all-wise philosophers, and so was reluctantly forced to confess that the best available guides were the written laws and national customs of the people as the expression of experience and practical wisdom."

It was with full appreciation of this deficiency in human character that those charged with the task of framing a national government for the United States reached the conclusion that a written constitution would serve as the most efficient safeguard of the rights and liberties of the people, and as the greatest obstacle in the path of any subsequent attempt, especially on the part of a popular executive, to exercise undue authority. The reservation to the contracting States of all powers not explicitly conferred upon the national government was more than a jealous withholding from that government of certain functions of authority which had been possessed and exercised by the separate Colonies; it was a direct response to the instinct of individual freedom, which was the chief cause of, and had been greatly

intensified by, the war for independence. Encroachment of national sovereignty upon State prerogatives is precisely parallel with unwarranted interference of the State in the self-government of a city or a township, or with deprivation by the latter of a citizen's personal liberty. The fundamental distinction between our theory of government and that of monarchy is found in the recognition by us of the plain citizen as the true possessor of the divine rights claimed by kings, and denied, in their executive capacity, to those whom we select as administrators of government to serve, not to rule, the public. The present proposal, therefore, to "obliterate State lines," even to the "extinction of State authority," involves a complete reversal of our basic theory of government, and strikes at the very root of personal freedom.

More than one hundred years ago Chief-Justice John Marshall declared that:

"No political dreamer was ever wild enough to think of breaking down the lines which separate the States and of compounding the people into one common mass."

And, later, Daniel Webster:

"The necessity of holding strictly to the principles upon which free governments are constructed, and to those precise lines which fix the partitions of power between different branches, is as plain, if not as cogent, as that of resisting, as our fathers did, the strides of the parent country against the rights of the Colonies; because, whether the power which exceeds its just limits be foreign or domestic, whether it be the encroachment of all branches on the rights of the people, or that of one branch on the rights of others, in either case the balanced and well-adjusted machinery of free government is disturbed, and, if the derangement go on, the whole system must fall. . . . Even if no harm or inconvenience results from transgressing the boundary, the intrusion is not to be suffered to pass unnoticed. Every encroachment, great or small, is important enough to awaken the attention of those who are entrusted with the preservation of a constitutional government. We are not to wait till great public mischiefs come, till the government is overthrown, or liberty itself put into extreme jeopardy. We should not be worthy sons of our fathers were we so to regard great questions affecting the general feeling."

These were the utterances, not of men accustomed to bow before the idea of State rights as a fetish, but of the foremost Federalist and Whig expounders of our theory of *National* government. And yet daily now we behold open and avowed sub-

versions of those fundamental principles by neither ineffective "political dreamers," nor even a political organization, but by an active, able and resolute clique, which, under most aggressive leadership, holds absolute control of one arm of the government, successfully coerces another and insidiously endeavors to influence the court of last resort. That, in holding centralization of power to be mere substitution of one regulative authority for another, and not despoilment of the right of the people to govern themselves, those responsible for the "tendency" are conscious of wrong-doing we neither assert nor believe; circumstances and the glamour of place have really convinced them that all regard for public virtue and all sense of business morality are confined to the governing group; and their conviction that good can come from no other authority constituted among and closer to the people is sincere. Therein lies the same greater measure of danger that recently confronted the country when false principles were personified in a candidate for the Presidency, of whose personal genuineness there was no question.

The gravity of the situation, plainly evidenced by the President's recent declarations upon all conceivable topics, from before the cradle in respect to race suicide to after the grave in relation to inheritance taxation, and by constant impatient demands for extension of executive authority, no less than by the outspoken menace in his chief official adviser's amazing public utterance, reached the comprehension of foreign observers with extraordinary rapidity, as contrasted with the gradual dawning of understanding respecting it on the part of our own people. The "Saturday Review" sums up a full statement with terse accuracy in these words:

"If Mr. Roosevelt intends his threats for anything beyond foreign consumption, we may be at the beginning of a constitutional struggle unequalled in danger to the Union since the Civil War."

It is our firm conviction that we are at the beginning of such a struggle now, and that, as solemnly adjured by Daniel Webster, we must "not wait till great public mischiefs come, till the government is overthrown, or liberty itself put into extreme jeopardy," if, in the words of Thomas Jefferson, we would retain "our peculiar security in the possession of a written constitution, not made a blank paper by *construction*."

THURSDAY, *December 27.*

On the Taxation of Spinsters.

WHY not tax old maids? As a class, they enjoy all of the advantages of civilization, barring those of a minor nature excluded by their own insistent regard for the conventions, and make no adequate return. True, their property, if real, is forced to yield a slight contribution to the common fund for preservation of order and protection of life and liberty, but their personal possessions are practically immune from imposts, and the less said of their contributions to customs revenue, perhaps, the better. Moreover, the great majority of them have no substantial acquisitions and, though in special instances no doubt a joy, are generally a burden upon patient relatives. Thus they become mere clogs upon the wheels of progress from the sheer obstinacy that holds them from the performance of their proper tasks in life.

There was never yet a woman who could not marry, as she should, if she would. Undoubtedly beauty of form, mind and character, to say nothing of worldly possessions and other minor aids, contribute largely to facilitate a man's discriminative selection of a mate, but none of these effects is really essential. It is only necessary to be a woman to win a man—some man. Eve surely was not rich and, judging from such portraits of her as we have seen, was quite plain in appearance; clearly, too, she was stupid or she would never have acted on a suggestion from a questionable source; but once she passed on the hint to him, how quick was Adam's fall! So it has ever been and ever will be. Spinsterhood is a purely voluntary condition, due to reprehensible contrariness, as is clearly proven by the non-existence of a single authentic claim to exemption because of lack of opportunity.

Deliberate refusal to fulfil a destiny, such as we expect daily to see firmly set forth in a special message as obviously intended by the Creator of us all, is, we grant, less inexcusable in this country than elsewhere; we have even so high authority as our new ambassador from Great Britain, expressed in his "American Commonwealth," for the assertion that, "More resources are open to an American woman who has to lead a solitary life, not merely in the way of employment, but for the occupation of her mind and tastes, than to an English spinster or widow." Our acquaintance with Englishwomen of the two classes designated is not sufficiently wide to justify disagreement with this careful

view, even though we did not, as we do, hold that widows are *sui generis* and should never be confounded with others of their sex; but in any case, in view of the fact already established that there is no such woman, *i. e.*, one compelled to "lead a solitary life," the differentiation between nationalities need not be considered.

The real point at issue is whether the old maid of the present day renders a fair equivalent, or even tries to do so in one way or another, for what she receives; and to that our answer is decisively negative. As contrasted even with her uninteresting prototype of twenty or thirty years ago, she is less disposed to humble recognition of the ignominy of her position, often more petulant and invariably more exacting, contemptuous of children, and only in rare exceptions kindly disposed even towards cats, to say nothing of mice and other gentle and unoffending creatures. Decorous behavior has been relegated to the pages of mythology; and the Puritanic primness, whose very rigidity once constituted a unique charm, has been shamelessly supplanted by a seeming resentment at the recognized necessity of maintaining a serious appearance. It is a sad state of affairs, to which we have given much unavailing thought. As a last resort in search of a method of reformation, the ubiquitary remedy of taxation occurs to our mind as the only one holding forth hope of effectiveness.

Bitter experience has demonstrated that no determined action on the part of local or State authorities can be anticipated in response to even so peremptory a demand in the plain interest of an indivisible nation, but spinsters are proverbially peripatetic and flit from sister to sister, and from brother-in-law to brother-in-law with the facility of an awestruck Secretary of State passing from Washington to New York in five short hours; so we may assume that they could readily be brought within the provisions of the act relating to interstate commerce, and be compelled by suitable "constructions" of the Constitution to meet their just obligations to the rapidly disappearing human race.

We would only add that:

"If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well
It were done quickly—"

for time is short and "other projects are mooted."

FRIDAY, December 28.

Mottoes for the New Year.

WE cannot conscientiously advise frail human beings to make good resolutions for the forthcoming year; observation has taught us that the keeping of them is impracticable, and the breaking of them both humiliating and a source of habitual weakness. Better far to cull from accumulated wisdom a simple motto to serve as a guide in days of ease and to fall back upon in times of despair. The boy Keats seems to have exemplified the pervading spirit of our own community of the present day when he selected Ariel's line,

"Where the bee sucks, there suck I,"

but, really, of course, nothing was further from his thought than material achievement. His love was for the sweetness, the honeyed ease, the luscious quality of life; severity of thought was foreign to his nature and chilled it. "Do not all charms," he exclaimed, "fly at the mere touch of cold philosophy?" and again—

"The silver flow
Of Hero's tears, the swoon of Imogen,
Fair Pastorella in the bandits' den
Are things to brood on with more ardency
Than the death-day of empires."

His was the instinct that induced Porphyro to delay his elopement while he drew from his closet a heap—

"Of candied apple, quince and plum and gourd,
With jellies soother than the creamy curd,
And lucent syrups, tinct with cinnamon,
Manna and dates in argosy transferred
From Fez; and spiced dainties, every one
From silken Samarcand to cedar'd Lebanon."

Few of us have failed, at one time or another, to hear this voluptuous call and yearn for "drowsy noons and evenings steeped in honeyed indolence"; but how quickly fades the longing when subjected to the pitiless test of experience! Preferable, on the whole, in this workaday life, is the sharply contrasting motto of Browning's Herakles—

"Harder and higher!"

a tough, athletic expression easily imagined in a President's message and good to give a boy, even though it be interpreted physically instead of being set to the spiritual rhythm of life.

For those worried by recent unsettlement of dogma, the maxim of Marcus Aurelius,

"The universe is transformation, life is opinion,"

or even Shakespeare's less morally conceived,

"There's nothing either good or bad
But thinking makes it so,"

may serve a useful purpose; but, while granting to every one his special need, if he by diligence can find it, we find none more deserving of universal, though, perhaps, supplemental, adoption than the familiar adjuration of Epictetus—

"Act well the part that's given you; to select the part belongs to another."

There is a different quality in Pater's Marius,

"Tristem neminem fecit";

but, whatever the choice, so it be worthy, one motto, never forgotten and repeated at intervals, will facilitate to a greater degree than even the traditional "peck" of good resolutions an endeavor to attain coherency of conduct.

SATURDAY, December 29.

Of American Manners.

OUR manners are improving. The change is not marked, but is taking place, nevertheless, in that gradual manner which is best because it makes for permanence. Time was in this hardy young land when the grace of the Frenchman in particular evoked a contemptuous sneer as befitting only effeminate eaters of frogs; but travel has worn away much of this prejudice, and no sight is more common in Paris nowadays than that of American visitors beaming sympathetically, yet with rare attempt at emulation, upon manifestations of courtesy which once would have seemed to them absurd.

We shall never be as polite as the Latins; no Saxon or Teuton may hope to be, nor would we if we could. The preservation of a racial characteristic is far preferable to what can never become more than mere imitation, and no persons are more ridiculous

than those who are ever trying to show better manners than they really possess. Moreover, true courtesy is by no means altogether in the seeming; the unspoken word is often more eloquent than the most eager protestations of respect or even affection. The traditional boorishness of the English must be admitted, but only of the great middle class, which constitutes the hardihood of the nation; the deference of those comprising the lower strata is, in fact, offensive; and to our mind the finest manners in the world are those of the refined aristocracy. Their merit lies chiefly in their simplicity and appropriateness. Our ancestors were quite justified in refusing with indignation to

“ . . . let the candied tongue lick absurd pomp,
And crook the pregnant hinges of the knee ”

to such a monarch as George the Third, but probably there never lived a ruler, even in our own land, to whom Americans would so gladly have rendered personal homage as Queen Victoria. True, in so doing, they might have erred, as many err now, we are told, in addressing the King as “Your Majesty” instead of using the simple “Sir,” as once they should have said “Ma’am” to the gracious mother of her people; but such exaggeration, if resting upon sincerity, cannot be held to be offensive. We would that those and similar terms were employed more punctiliously by us. Gladly would we part with the uncalled-for and, in England, long since discarded “Mister,” among men of like age and position, if we might substitute “Sir” for it as a token of respect for age and achievement. Precisely where the line of demarcation should be drawn it is difficult to say; for ourselves, we make it a practice invariably to address one approximately fifteen years older than ourselves as “Sir,” and we frankly appreciate a like courtesy from those correspondingly younger. Among women we greatly prefer “Madam” to the English “Ma’am” and, of course, detest “Lady” as used by menials, the hissing “Missus” of too-familiar husbands, nicknames and all terms whatsoever of petty or maudlin endearment.

But it is not—at this time—our purpose to scold; we wish only to note the gradual removal of a just cause of reproach against Americans by older peoples and to encourage a gratifying tendency. It is not true, as declared in the form of mottoes upon the walls of a famous boys’ school in England, that “manners make

the man," but they help; and, much as we may despise them as a mere outer garment and superficial soul-covering, we cannot ignore the fact that they are still vital conditions of social intercourse and afford much of the charm without which existence would be unendurable. Beautiful manners are as captivating as a beautiful face or hand or form, and, unlike these, may be acquired. To be born and bred well is a great blessing, but it is not necessary to chide Fortune, as Shakespeare did, for not having provided better for his life

"than public means which public manners breed."

Suavity and gentleness cost only a little self-restraint and a little thought now and then, and yet they not only occasion much pleasure to others, but save ourselves much of the tumult and ugliness and embroilment of life. Lucky, indeed, is that deservedly popular woman, American born and English bred, who once said to us, "I am always polite because it is so much trouble to be rude." After all, we cannot be very much better than our manners, any more than our clothes can surpass our taste, but it may be that goodness can be developed in the inner consciousness by outer conditions. At any rate, we know one woman who smiles continuously because she firmly believes that, if she persistently wears the expression of harmony, the inner mood will respond. We are unable to perceive a very considerable change as yet, and we must admit frankly that we could not endure for long an unyielding smile; and yet we have no doubt that considerate manners would in time tend to the development, in part, of the inward gentleness of which some of us still stand somewhat in need.

MONDAY, December 31.

For an American Esperanto Society.

CAN there be one "with soul so dead" as to fail to be impressed by the aspirations of the inventor of Esperanto as expressed in this REVIEW? The sincerity of Doctor Zamenhof is as transparent as his simplicity, and the most casual study of his exposition discovers the inherent clarity of mind which made it possible for him to accomplish the great purpose which so many have attempted in vain. The mental stultification characteristic of a close student enmeshed in his own profundity in

no wise appears; indeed, the very carefulness of his differentiation between, and singularly happy combination of, the practical and ideal evokes sympathetic recognition. Obviously, in the mind of this great man no question of "copyright" or material gain has ever arisen; what he has been blessed with the power to bestow he transfers promptly and gladly to the "natural possessor" of a universal language—"the entire world."

The manifestation of such a spirit is doubly appealing in days like these and becomes truly inspiring when accompanied by a frank avowal that it is to America, untrammelled by traditions and progressive by instinct, that he looks for encouragement and even leadership. "The brotherhood of mankind is the object for which Esperanto was created," is the declaration, which we believe to be true and worthy of one the best part of whose race is still dominated by spiritual rather than material aspirations. The aim, therefore, is of the highest; and yet, in the words of its builder, "Esperanto hopes only to become merely the uniting language in those regions where various tongues are struggling for supremacy, or where one nationality is trying to force its language upon another"—the chief cause, as we have observed, of those strifes which have most seriously retarded civilizing progression.

We return, then, persistently to the matter of practicability and continue to find favorable evidences multiplying. Tolstoy, asked his opinion of Esperanto as an auxiliary international language, replied:

"I have often thought that there is no more Christian science than the study of languages, that study which permits of our communicating and allying ourselves with an incalculable number of our fellow men, and I have often remarked how people bear themselves as enemies to one another, solely because they have no means of intercommunication. The study of Esperanto, then, and its diffusion, is assuredly a Christian labor which hastens the coming of the kingdom of God, the main—I should say, the only—aim of human life."

Professor Wilhelm Ostwald, of the University of Leipzig, one of the few real philosophers in this day of professors of philosophy, has become a staunch supporter of the cause of the new language. As a scientist, visiting one university after another in many lands, he has concluded that Esperanto is at once the hope and solution of the problem of intercommunication

even among learned men. In France some of the leading Esperantists are Professors Berthelot and Poincaré, members of the Institute of France; General Sébert, of the French Army; and M. Boirac, the Academician, Rector of the University of Dijon, who sees in the growth of Esperanto an event as vital as the invention of printing. In England, the President of the British Society is Lieutenant-Colonel Pollen, the well-known linguist and experienced traveller; and the President of the London Society is Felix Moscheles, the celebrated artist and fervent worker on behalf of international arbitration and peace. Prominent in advocacy are Major-General George Cox, of the British Army, and W. T. Stead, editor of the English "Review of Reviews," who now has a regular department of information about Esperanto in his magazine.

In this country Professors Huntington and Morse of Harvard, Professor Viles of the Ohio State University, Professor Borgerhoff of Western Reserve University, as well as Professor Macloskie of Princeton, whose admirable essay we published recently, are among the first to signify appreciation of the merits of the invention. The first sign of primary teaching appears in the famous Latin school of Roxbury, where an optional course, already adopted by a class of fifty, has been established by Professor Lowell, who recently said:

"If the movement continues to grow as it is growing now, within a few years every book published in the civilized world will be printed in two languages—its native tongue and Esperanto. The one in Esperanto will open the book to the whole world, and it will be the same as though the work had been translated into every language. The thought treasures of every people will be unlocked to any person who has mastered this simple key.

"Suppose that in Europe a new play appears, or a novel or an important work on economics, socialism, philosophy or art. The world must wait upon the translator, whether it be a year or never. To get it to all modern nations a score of translations must be made into the various languages. It might go into many European tongues before it reached the English-speaking person. But if translated into Esperanto it would go at once among all nationalities. The reader of Esperanto in Boston would have access to the work simultaneously with all European countries."

We may add that evidences of interest among the readers of the REVIEW, forthcoming since we declared faith in the adaptability of Esperanto and announced our intention to promulgate

it, have been many and multiply daily. The primer whose publication has been begun on other pages is, we believe, the best and simplest yet made; simultaneously we have in preparation a series of text-books, which, in consonance with the spirit of the creator of the language, we shall furnish at actual cost of manufacture to all who may signify a desire to have them. Meanwhile, we shall be pleased to answer any inquiries relative to the subject and to enroll the names of all who feel sufficient interest in it to become members of a general Esperanto Society which we propose to institute under the honorary Presidency of Doctor Zamenhof. The purpose of this society will be to cooperate with similar associations in facilitating the spread of the new universal language. The special means to be employed will be:

- (a) Promoting the formation of new local Groups.
- (b) Distributing information and publishing propaganda literature.
- (c) Organizing examinations and granting certificates of proficiency.
- (d) Promoting lectures and arranging for correspondence, loans of collections of literature, etc.
- (e) Promoting arrangements for Congresses at home and abroad.

Membership will involve no pecuniary expenditure. The entire cost of maintaining the organization will be borne by the **REVIEW**.